

*Terry Talker*

**An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)**

**by**

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**Abstract:**

*"Terry Talker was a child whose vocal chords were running wild."*

*Terry Talker* is a poetry manuscript about a young boy with horrendous communication skills. After his parents dismiss him, he journeys into the woods with Mary Canary, whose speech is of equivalent eloquence. Together, they meet a unique cast of animals whose linguistic barriers reveal insight into their own.

## **Acknowledgements:**

As I finally present *Terry Talker*, I want to thank those who have helped me over the past years, as this concept has become a reality. I first want to thank Ball State English Education faculty members who have supported me throughout my college career and my thesis experience. Firstly I acknowledge my thesis advisor, Dr. Darolyn Jones, who first welcomed me to Ball State University and the English Education program in English 150 in my first semester and who is now seeing me through graduation with this fulfillment of this project. The other English Education faculty, Dr. Susanna Benko and Dr. Pamela Hartman, who have helped me grow into the teacher I am today.

Secondly I acknowledge the Ball State Honors College for offering educational experiences that transcended the requirements of my program and who through extensive study of the humanities have helped me become a thoughtful individual dedicated to affecting the world in a positive way, namely my professors Dr. Jason Powell and Dr. Timothy Berg.

Thirdly, I recognize the Ball State Writers' Community, who welcomed me with open arms into a group committed to their craft, who showed me how writers write and helped me shift perspective from someone who taught writing, to a writer who teaches writing. Their stewardship brought me in close contact to friends I will always treasure. My time as their President enabled me to become confident as a creator and artist. The close community we brought together were crucial in the planning and crafting of *Terry Talker* and innumerable other pieces of creative writing.

Finally, I want to thank two musicians who were instrumental in this fruition of *Terry Talker*. First, songwriter Harry Nilsson, whose children's film *The Point!* first inspired *Terry Talker*. Secondly, Curtis Mayfield, whose song "Little Child Runnin Wild" from the *SuperFly* soundtrack inspired the opening line of *Terry Talker* and pulled me from a state of writers' block and finally began the composition of the poems.



## **Artist Statement:**

*Terry Talker* is a work of children's poetry written with the aim of improving readers' communication skills. Each poem in *Terry Talker* tells a story of Terry and Mary meeting another animal of the forest with an exaggerated communication flaw. For instance, there's the vaudevillian entertainer, Christopher Chameleon, who despite his gift of camouflage cannot adapt his manner of performance to an appropriate mode for his intended audience. Another example is Oliver Owl, PhD, whose overwhelming knowledge and pretentious demeanor gets in the way of communicating direct, effective messages. Rather than this cast of characters imparting lessons about strong communication to Terry, he learns to speak better through observing, in comical situations, exactly how *not* to speak.

This work of children's literature is designed as a both a work of poetry and a language arts teaching tool. The piece stems from a blending of the creative writing and English education disciplines, and is intended as a humorous metanarrative on linguistic skills and the didactic nature of popular children's literature. My background in language arts instructions informs the challenges that Terry faces. For instance, Terry learns to avoid brash and overbearing messages, he learns to tailor messages to an audience, and learns that listening can be just as important as being heard. These lessons are important for any developing speaker and they each penetrate the field of language arts instruction, however they are packaged in narrative forms educational for children but clever and compelling enough to entertain readers of all ages. The

reader follows Terry on his journey from a shouting, interrupting, and wild child and sees him solve a myriad of woodland conflicts as he grows into an effective and compassionate speaker. As we read along, we learn just as much about speaking well as Terry does.

*Terry Talker* originated in a poem I wrote my junior year titled “The Canary and Her Cage.” A few lines from the poem remain in tact in Mary and Terry’s initial dialogue in the second poem of the collection, “The Bizarre Bazaar.” In its initial incarnation, Terry was a nameless adult and was a one-off musing on an existential view of domesticity. The idea to turn this concept into a long-form work of children’s poetry came not from other children’s literature, but from a record produced by songwriter Harry Nilsson called *The Point!* (1971). The collection of songs takes the form of a fable and is based around an extended pun on “pointlessness” wherein a young boy named Oblio is born in the Pointed Village where by law everyone and everything must have a “point.” Though I initially encountered *The Point!* as a long-playing record with an accompanying illustrated book, I found that its more popular counterpart was an animated film narrated by Ringo Starr in the British version and Dustin Hoffman in the American version. I was drawn to the idea of a clever, witty fable framed as a children’s work but that maintains artistic merit for an adult audience.

Inspired by Nilsson’s piece, one of my initial thoughts was to turn the developing *Terry Talker* concept into a musical album, perhaps with an accompanying stage show or animated film. However, the piece was firmly rooted in its origins as a work of poetry and continued as such. Along the writing

process, *Terry Talker* borrowed on literary influences such as the resounding poetry of Shel Silverstein such as *Where the Sidewalk Ends* which bridges legitimate childhood concerns as well as tailoring fanciful environments for its narrative backdrops. The whimsical storytelling of Roald Dahl was another strong influence, with many of Terry's animal friends adopting quirky traits akin to characters like Willy Wonka from *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964) and many of the adults in Terry's life taking on the antagonistic qualities of adults in stories like *Matilda* (1988). The didactic qualities of the story, as well as its narrative device of talking animals, call upon A. A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926). The journey to the woods and accompanying life lessons also take a cue from Maurice Sendak's *Where The Wild Things Are* (1963). The surreal qualities of both *Terry Talker's* characters and its settings are partly inspired by Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) – while the piece is founded in purposeful instruction, its tone recalls Carroll's genre of "literary nonsense," playing with the logic of the natural world. The animals Terry meets are adapted to certain human professions – entertainer, intellectual, teacher. However, in the climax of the story, Terry faces off in a game of riddles with Cassidy Coyote, a Western genre villainous archetype most strongly inspired by the trickster coyote that permeates Native American storytelling. This particular archetype has been a large point of interest in my academic studies and given its role as an antagonistic educator within its classic myths, I wanted the coyote figure to have a place in my narrative.

Looking ahead, I have further plans for *Terry Talker*. With this manuscript,

I hope to seek publication for my work. If my piece results in self-publication, I will independently seek illustration. I believe that making the work an experiment in graphic poetry would be ideal for the story. Graphic novels have lately gained traction in the literary market. However, the vast majority of these works are geared to young adult audiences or older readers. There are fewer graphic novels appropriate for young readers, and even fewer that work with poetry rather than prose as their framework. Particularly, since the majority of *Terry Talker* consists of dialogue, a comic style illustration would suit it. The nature of the children's literature market, however, is that authors have little say in the illustration of their pieces. Since adoption by an established publisher would be the ideal avenue for *Terry Talker* reaching a wider audience and achieving success in its life beyond academia, I am delaying illustrations or other potential adaptations, such as its original conception as a musical work, until after these first explorations into publishing. Now that the manuscript is complete, I look forward to seeing what becomes of *Terry Talker* in the years to come as I seek out the possibilities for its direction beyond text.

## **Full Text**

### ***Terry Talker***

**by Blake A. Mellencamp**

#### **“The Ballad of Terry Talker”**

Terry Talker was a child,  
Whose vocal chords were running wild.  
When he was upset he didn't pout,  
He simply just began to shout.  
He didn't care for listening,  
But would rather just let his voice ring.  
He would tattletale on his brother  
And was always making fun of others.  
And his family got earfuls of his words,  
Terry ONLY spoke out of turn.

His parents did not like this fact.  
Dad said, “Son, you'd better pack!”  
And Mom said “I can't stand the way you shout,  
I need quiet in this house, so get on out!”  
At just a mere ten years old,  
Terry was sent out all alone.  
He took his sentence grudgingly,  
But thought, “Hey, I've got a world to see!”  
Through the alleys and streets he walked,  
Searching for a soul to tolerate his talk.

## **“The Bizarre Bazaar”**

Across town Terry's talk was heard  
When he came across a little bird.  
He had searched everywhere – wide and far,  
When he came across a bizarre bazaar.  
There were lumps of coal and rustic globes,  
Hand-sculpted bowls and woolen robes.  
Terry looked and saw, he “ooh'd” and “aww'd”  
“exclaimed, remarked, gasped, and guffawed.”  
The shopkeep said “Kid, stop your yappin’  
If I was your age I’d give ya a slappin’!”  
In the back, hung a gold bird cage,  
A thin tin barred yellow place,  
A little light-weight jail,  
That held a Canary, small and frail...

Mary: Take a picture, it'll last longer.

Mary: What do you think you're looking at?  
Eyeing me like some putty-tat.

Terry: You sure are funny.

Mary: And your nose is runny.  
Who do you think you're talking to?  
Think I'm funny? Get a load of you.

Terry: if you're in there all day, what do you do?

Mary: If you like staring, take it to the zoo.

Terry: So it doesn't bother you? Not even a bit?

Mary: if that's what you think – then you're an idiot.

Terry: Why are you calling me names, nitwit?

Mary: Cause I'm Mary Canary and I tell it like it is.

Terry: My name's Terry... Can we be friends?

Mary: Don't make me laugh. You insulted me.  
You implied I don't wanna be free.  
So ski-daddle.

Terry:               -When you said I was mean...  
I get that a lot, but I'm not sure what it means.  
Truth be told – I think you were mean to me.  
But I can't remember a conversation so long,  
Without someone just sending me along.  
And I think you you're a bit head strong,  
But all in all, I like the sound of your song.

Shopkeep: Well, looks like you're a perfect pair,  
So take your noise and get out of here!

Terry: Mary Canary, where will we go?  
My parents don't want me coming back home.

Mary: Looks like you've gotta clean up your act,  
So you and me, we'll make a pact.  
If you're having trouble with your speech,  
It ain't these lousy humans you need.

Terry: They don't want me around anyway  
...cause of all the noisy things I say.

Mary: For getting me out of that cage,  
I'll come along with you for the day.  
I'll help you get the help you need,  
So let's go out among the trees.

## **“Claws and Phrases”**

Mary: Oh to be flying through the sky.

Terry: All I see's a rotten walk in the woods.

Mary: It was too cramped in that cage to fly.

Terry: Mom and dad said the woods are no good.

Mary: Oh, I see. That's it. You're scared.

Terry: But what about the signs that say beware?

What if there are lions...

Or tigers...

Or...

Braxton: ROOOOOOOOOOOAAAAAAARRRRRRRRRR!

Mary&Terry: BEARS!

Braxton: Now I'm the biggest, baddest, burliest bear.

You should've read those signs that said beware,

Cause this is my big woodsy town,

And you punks are on my turf now.

Terry: Uh...um – excuse us, pardon me, we'll leave

Braxton: Kid - all that stammerin' is making me hungry

Mary: Listen up, just let us on through,

Then we'll be over and done with you.

Braxton: Oh no, Oh no.

I don't think so.

No one leaves who comes round here,

Without first getting a taste of the fear.

Hope you weren't planning on turning back,

Because I'm just starving for a snack.

Mary: I'd like to see you try, you big dumb bear

You can't reach me up here in the air

Braxton: Grr, little boy. Nothing you can do.

Mary: Hey now, bully. We ain't scared of you.



Braxton: You – you're not scared of me?  
Well gosh, you two – golly gee.  
You're the first who's ever said that.  
And honest, I'm not that bad.  
It's hard to be the biggest, baddest, burliest here,  
Cause the whole forest greets me with fear.

Mary: You don't look that tough, crybaby.

Terry: Hey, don't get him mad again, crazy.

Braxton: I'm so loud and brash that no one's my friend.  
They think if they meet me, it'll be their end.  
But in truth, I have feelings too,  
It's just that no one's listened 'til you.

Terry: Mr. Bear – we've got a lot in common now.  
Nobody likes to talk to us either,  
Cause we interrupt or we're loud,  
Or we throw fits, and we don't listen neither.

Mary: That's why we're here.  
No humans can stand talking to Terry.  
So we're learning from some of my animal peers,  
But I suppose the woods are toooo big and scary.

Braxton: Don't worry yourselves, no need to fear.  
I'm Braxton Bear and there's no need to be wary.  
This here is my neck of the woods,  
And I think the two of you are good.  
So if you want to pass through here,  
Both of you are in the clear.  
Thanks for showing me that though I'm a bear,  
I can do more than just roar and scare.

Terry: Thanks, Mr. Bear. My name is Terry.

Mary: And I'm Mary Canary.  
You know, Braxton – I never liked bears.

Terry: -but – she's so thankful you've been so fair!

## **“The Vaudevillian Chameleon”**

Terry: Mary, take a look at this “leaf”-let.

*“Ladies and Gentlemen, Step right up  
To see the greatest show in the forest!  
I am the mystic Christopher Chameleon,  
And my woodland spectacle’s the very best!”*

Mary: A moneymaking scheme, I’ll bet.

Terry: Says here he’s captivating, this Mr. Chameleon.

Mary: I’m telling you this chameleon just wants to make millions.

Terry: It’s not like we have any other leads.

Mary: Fine, we’ll go to the show and then we’ll see.

The two walked to a big forest clearing,  
And you’ll never guess what they spied.  
Right before them was appearing  
An audience of a hundred flies.

Chris: For my first trick, I need a volunteer.  
Who’s up to the test?

Fly: - I am!

Chris: Watch as I make him disappear,  
Abracadabra, Alakazam! \*gulp\*

He ate the fly.  
A panic ensued.  
The flies got so wild,  
It was a practical zoo.

Mary: Told you he wasn’t worth our time.

Terry: Forget that for now! What do we do?  
That lizard committed a terrible crime.

Mary: What to do? Hold on, I’ll show you.  
Mr. Chameleon, you’re clearly insane,  
And for that, there’s no way I’m paying.

Terry: -Mary! But what about the fly!

I'm sick of hearing these other flies cry.

Mary: Fine. Hey, hey, you miserable lout.  
I demand you spit that fly out.

Chris: But how?

Mary: Now.

Chris: You can't stop me.  
I'll disappear \*camoflaugé\*  
Hehehe, now I'll go free.

Mary: I know you're still here.

So Mary Canary grabbed the reptile's tongue,  
and out from his mouth, the little fly sprung.

FlyFamily: Oh my word, you're still alive  
We're so glad that you survived!  
You there, Canary, and your little boy, too.  
Whatever can we do? We must repay you!  
You're our heroes!

Mary: Not too shabby - in the city we were zeroes.

Now where'd that creepy lizard go?  
These flies need a refund for that show.

Chris: I'll do anything, just please don't hurt me.  
Take it all back, I'll give you your money!

Terry: Listen up, Chris, don't you have any sense?

Chris: No – no – I gave you all the cents I had!

Terry: I'm talking about the way you treat your audience!  
How could you possibly treat them so bad?

Fly: Yeah! What's the matter with you?  
I have half a mind to sue.

Chris: Alright, alright – I made a mistake.  
I just wanted you to think my magic is great.  
I performed the trick just like I knew,  
Without stopping to think who I was talking to.

Terry: I thought he could help us, but I was wrong.  
His magic wasn't cheap and his talk wasn't strong.

Fly: You're looking for someone who can talk well?  
I think that's a fine goal. It's just swell!  
Seeing how much I owe you two,  
I'll tell you just what to do!  
There's one in the forest smarter than the rest.  
If you're looking for a teacher, Oliver's the best!

## **“What a Hoot”**

Mary: He said it's around here, didn't he?

Terry: But if that's true, where could Oliver be?

Mary: I knew we couldn't trust that fly.  
Leave it to an insect to be telling lies.

Terry: No, he wouldn't lie. Let's look around a bit.  
This is where the fly said? Isn't it?

Oliver: Top of the morning, chums – but have you not heard?  
That awful utterance – “ain't” – is not a word.

Mary: This wise guy...

Terry: Are you Oliver?  
I'm Terry, this is Mary, and we're seeking a teacher.

Oliver: Who?

Terry: Terry Talker and Mary Canary.

Oliver: Who?

Mary: Get your ears checked, Dodo.

Oliver: Who?

Terry: Wait, are you just saying that because you're an owl?  
Listen, we've heard you talk good. Show us how?

Oliver: Hmm...you two obviously lack in potential.  
Any instruction I give will be inconsequential.  
Where have you studied previously?  
That will determine the duration and fee.

Mary: Fee? We're broke! I've been stuck in a cage!

Oliver: Akin to Plato's allegorical cave...  
You might make a delightful experiment,  
Seeing as you're starting simple as sediment.

Terry: Mr. Owl, I'm having trouble getting what you mean

Oliver: That's professor to you. Oliver Owl, Ph.D.

Mary: Ph - What?

Oliver:               -A doctor of philosophy.  
           Lesson One. Vocabulary.  
           Repeat after me. Knowing how to read.  
           A better word would be literacy.  
           It truly is simple, can't you see?

Mary: Hey, we're not stupid. No need to be mean.

Terry: Professor Owl – Will you teach us or not?

Oliver: Hmph – There is a tremendous amount to be taught.

Mary: You're starting to sound as bad as a cat.  
           What exactly are you getting at?

Oliver: Hmph. Lesson two. Prepositions.  
           Never placed at the end, but in their proper positions.

Mary: No "why" or "how" – Ain't that a hoot.  
           He just tell us what to do.

Oliver: It appears, then, it's time for Lesson Three.  
           So close your mouth and listen to me.  
           Language is dictated by particular rules.  
           If you do not follow them, you are merely fools.

Terry: Nothing's been this uncool since summer school.

Mary: Why not skip the rules and just give us some tools?

Oliver: If you hesitate to follow the proper procedures,  
           Then I ask that you please leave at your leisure.

Terry: Mary, it looks like you blew it again.

Mary: Don't sweat it, Terry. We didn't need him.  
           If you think he's a good teacher, then check your head,  
           Cause I couldn't understand a single word he said!  
           Saying "ain't" doesn't mean you're insane.  
           Why should he have a problem if we're using slang?

Terry: But then...just how dumb will we seem?

Mary: Terry, I think it's easier to just say what we mean.

## **“Back to School”**

Terry: You know, maybe that owl did have a point.  
The best place to learn might be a school.

Mary: No way. That cage was close enough to that joint.  
Only thing they teach there's how to be uncool.  
Besides - where're we gonna find a school in the woods?

Terry: I didn't expect a lot of things we've seen.  
You know, right now a snack sounds good.  
I'll share my crackers if you quit being mean.

Mary: D-Did you say cracker? Mary wants a cracker.  
I want it. I want it, pretty pretty please.

Deer Truancy Officer: Hey kid. Are you skipping school, slacker?  
I don't want any excuses. Just head for the stream.

Terry: See...never know what to expect. Wait, this is just a creek  
What? Are we supposed to learn from a school of fish?

Mary: Please, please, please, just put some crumbs in my beak.  
That cracker looks so completely delish-  
\*glug glug glug\*

Terry: Those fish'll get the crackers wet!

Mary: You fish stop that splashing!  
Quit it now, or I'll get a net!  
\*glug glug glug\*

Terry: They can't hear us through all their thrashing.

Mary: Go and see what the fuss is about.

Terry: How? By sticking my head in?

Mary: Yep. Only way to figure it out.  
No hurry up and begin.

\*Glug Glug Glug\*  
\*Food Food Food!\*  
\*I'm hungry! Gimme some! Crackers!\*



Fran: Class, please be quiet.  
Is that any way to treat a guest?

Terry: We were wondering the cause of this riot.  
I know you want some, but we can't share the rest.

\*I want it! Now! Give it here!\*

Fran: No, that's fine. We understand.  
Class! Please calm down.

Terry: I'm sorry. I need to get back to land.  
I sort of feel like I'm gonna drown.

Mary: Terry, you're finally back.  
Now seriously, give it here.

Terry: Sure, Mary, have a snack.  
I'm not afraid to share.  
But as for the rest...  
I don't think I need any.  
Giving it to the school'd be best  
Better to spread it among many.

Fran: Why, thank you so much young man.  
We appreciate all your sharing.  
Now these fish are your biggest fans.  
You truly are so very caring.  
I'm Fran Fish, nice to meet you.  
If you need anything just let us know.

Mary: Haha, you're nice. I never knew.

Terry: Thank you, Fran. There is one thing, though.  
We're looking for someone to talk to,  
To teach us to talk better than we know.

Fran: I think you speak very clearly.  
Keep going – I'd say you're there, nearly.

## **“Slow and Steady”**

Our heroes had found no success.  
 They had searched far and wide.  
 They'd past test, had little rest,  
 But had yet to find a guide.

In the deepest depths of the wood,  
 They searched for someone wise,  
 To teach them to talk like a good talker should,  
 When a tortoise fell upon their eyes.

Mary: I can't believe  
       we've found no one yet.  
       We might as well leave,  
       Cause we won't get what we came to get.

Terry: Hold on Mary,  
       Just one more shot.  
       I'm tired too – very,  
       But maybe this turtle is who we've sought.

Terrence: H...e....l....l....o...

Mary: He sure talks slow.  
       I've given up hope.  
       What's he know?  
       If you ask me, I bet he's a dope.

Terrence: .....

Mary: See, Terry, see?  
       He won't even speak.  
       How's he who we need?  
       He's just not who we seek.

Terrence: Patience, children. – don't you know?  
       Silence is golden...and that is your goal.

Mary: Silence? Silence?  
       But we wanna talk  
       Good riddance,  
       This tortoise is dumb as rocks.

Terry: Mary, listen to him.  
       Let him speak.

He's not dim,  
So shut your beak.

Terrence: I have heard...  
Tales of you...  
Boy and bird...  
If you only knew...

Terry: Tales...of us?  
But how?  
Of how we fussed?  
When we lived back in town?

Terrence: No....no...  
Oh, dear me.  
Tales...of hope  
...And bravery.

Mary: What are you on about?  
All we do is scream and shout.

Terrence: To calm the beastly bear  
And turn him to a friend;  
To put the owl's pride  
Finally to an end;  
To hold the lizard's tongue  
And save the humble fly;  
To go back to fishy school  
All the skills you did apply;

In all my years,  
In these woods here,  
No one's dried so many tears,  
Or conquered so very many fears,

And done it all with words.  
Little boy and little bird,  
You have come all this way,  
And met each of your goals today.

I could teach you,  
But I need not  
For you both speak true,  
And that's all I could have taught.

Terry: That means a lot.

Thank you, sir.

Mary: You mean we came all this way for nothing?

Terry: And I apologize for her  
rudely tweeting.

Mary: I see how it is. Wow.

Terry: Thank you. We'll be going now.

Terrence: Yes, Terry, it's getting late.  
Get back home and do not wait.  
I'm Terry, too – or rather Terrence,  
But do hurry back home and see your parents.

## **“The Long and Wily Road”**

Mary and Terry set out for home  
From the woods on a winding road.  
Equipped with all the things they'd learned:  
The speaking wisdom they had earned.

Cassidy: Stop.  
Drop what you're doing.  
Wait.  
Soon, you'll be boo-hooing.

Terry: Who is it?  
Who are you?

Mary: and what are you  
Going to do?

Cassidy: My name:  
Coyote, Cassidy.  
My game:  
Playful tricks and misery.  
You've come so far,  
So don't be hasty.  
Stop where you are,  
Cause you both look tasty.

Mary: You think we'll be eaten?  
Someone tried that and he was beaten.

Cassidy: The only way you leave,  
Whether or not you do believe,  
Is to play my game.  
As the others before – just the same.  
So entertain me. Solve my riddles,  
But in the end, I'll play you like fiddles.

Terry: We'll play your word games and take your test,  
Cause when it comes to words, we're the best.

Cassidy: One. In that forest there,  
There's one to cross that no one dares  
His teeth and claws do not play fair,  
And of his strength, one must beware.

Terry: Easy. Braxton Bear.

Cassidy: That one was easy, true,  
But here is riddle number two.

Putting on a show is a thespian,  
A creepy, crawly reptilian,  
Who plagues innocent civilians,  
By sending flies to oblivion.

Mary: That's Christopher Chameleon.

Cassidy: Correct, you got me.  
Now for riddle number three.

In the woods there is a fowl,  
Who every night is on the prowl.  
Genius flows from his jowls,  
And at stupidity he does scowl.

Terry: That awful bird – Oliver Owl.  
Are we done here?

Cassidy: I fear not, you'll struggle more.  
Time for riddle number four.

In the stream there is a fish,  
Certified in teaching English,  
She's any student's greatest wish  
And would also make a tasty dish.

Mary: Don't even joke about eating Fran.  
She's the nicest fish alive.

Cassidy: So be it. Riddle five.

In the forest's center, green and fertile,  
Lives a wise one, aged eternal.  
Any learner's final hurdle,  
The master of all things verbal.

Terry: Terrence Turtle.  
That's all of them. You've had your kicks.

Cassidy: Oh no, there's still one yet.  
Prepare yourselves for riddle six.

More fierce than all you've met prior,  
Maker of many situations dire.  
Turns little boys and birds into criers,  
And he's nothing...if not a liar.

You merely thought you were the winner.  
Put on your bibs. It's time for dinner.

Braxton: ROOOOOOOOAR!

Cassidy, you best beware!

You mess with them, you mess with Braxton Bear!

Cassidy: I see.

You've got the best of me.

Until the next time,

Little boy and bird and big grizzly.

Mary: Thanks for the help, Barxton Bear.

Braxton: With you, my claws I'm happy to share.

Now get on home, but visit soon,

Because we'll all be waiting for you!

## **“Homecoming”**

Having learned just how to talk,  
Terry and Mary concluded their walk.  
And after all the distance they'd roamed,  
Terry Talker was glad to be home.

Mother: Is that a little bird?

Terry: I promise not a peep'll be heard.

Father: You'll need a cage for that canary.

Terry: I don't think that'll be necessary.  
In a cage she'll do nothing but tweet.

Mother: Well, come on in and get something to eat.

Father: Now, here you are. Welcome back son.  
Have you thought about what you've done?

Terry: Mmhmm.

Mother: Well, then, Terry – what do you say?

Terry: I'm sorry – but more importantly, how was your day?